
ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE MIDDLE EAST



BULLETIN 24
SPRING 1990

OSME Bulletin 24

Editor: Mark Boyd

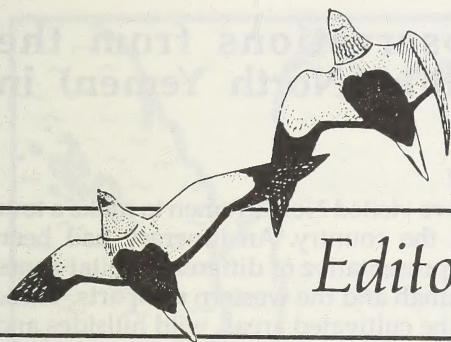
All records in this Bulletin are subject to acceptance by the relevant records committee of the country concerned.

Details of expeditions, availability of expedition reports, news of members, other societies, ornithological events, letters and any other items of interest to birdwatchers and conservationists concerned with the OSME region may be printed free of charge, subject to the discretion of the Bulletin Editor. Accompanying photographs and line-drawings will also be welcomed. Contributions for the next Bulletin should be sent to the Editor by 15 August 1990.

Illustrations We are grateful to the following artists for the illustrations used in this Bulletin:

S M Andrews: Philby's Rock Partridge, cover (see page 33 for details of cover auction); Black-bellied Sandgrouse 1; Crab Plover 4; Roller 6; Black-crowned Finch Lark 7; Black Bush Robin 8; Golden-winged Grosbeak 10; Dotterel 12; Egyptian Goose 20; Dead Sea Sparrow 26; Bridled Tern 38.

J M Walters: Wryneck 16



Editorial

With your support, OSME continues to expand and to exert a greater influence on conservation in the Middle East; and the activities of the Society continue to grow. In this Bulletin, for example, we announce OSME's first meeting outside Britain, which is to be held in The Netherlands this autumn. As our Secretary reported from the ICBP conference in Adana, Turkey, in Bulletin 23, OSME's importance is recognised internationally, and the benefits of OSME's initiatives in the Middle East continue to be felt (see 'News and Information').

To reflect this growing influence, Council felt that OSME's image should be made more professional. After much deliberation, Council has decided on a whole new corporate identity for the Society. The result is a new logo, letterheads and a new look for the OSME publications. This Bulletin is one result, and, from volume 12, *Sandgrouse* will also be upgraded and issued in two parts each year.

We hope you like the new publications. Among the most significant improvements for the Bulletin is that we can now use photographs as well as line-drawings. Photographs should be submitted only as prints, preferably black and white (but the two photographs by C Tucker included in this Bulletin were taken from colour prints), and can be included in any section.

This Bulletin has been typeset, rather than typewritten. Each article now takes up less space than it would previously have done, and so we are now able to include more material in each Bulletin without adding to our postal costs. To ensure the success of this new-look Bulletin, we would appeal to anyone who is considering submitting articles to do so. The more material we have, the better it will be for everyone.

Finally, we should like to thank all authors and artists for their submissions to the Bulletin over the years, and we should like to acknowledge the help of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in the production of past OSME Bulletins.

Ornithological observations from the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) in early May 1989

C W T Pilcher and G Gregory

During the period 4-8 May 1989, we visited North Yemen to make a tour of the southwestern quarter of the country. An itinerary had been planned to allow visits to sites representative of different habitat zones of the highland plateau, the Tihamah and the western ramparts. These sites thus included Sana'a City; the cultivated areas, wild hillsides and cliffs of Shibam/Kawkaban and Wadi Dahr; Sumarah Pass; Ta'izz sewage lagoons; sandy scrub desert of the southern Tihamah; coastal lagoons at Khawkhah and Hodeidah/Ras Katib; cultivated areas and foothills of the central Tihamah; the western ramparts and high slopes of Jabal an Nabi Shu'ayb. Numerous other localities were surveyed during spontaneous off-road excursions and roadside stops.

In the five-day period, 99 species were recorded, including many of the country's endemics. There are apparently very few observations for May (and June) on record (Brooks *et al.* 1987). Since ours appear to extend the dates of the presence of several winter visitors and passage migrants, in addition to providing further records of species for which there are few published observations, we report them here.

Systematic List

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*

One off Khawkhah, and two off Hodeidah on 6th.

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelicanus rufescens*

Two at Ras Katib on 6th.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Twelve at various locations between Hays and Hodeidah on 6th.

Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis*

Eight at Hodeidah on 6th.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Three at Hodeidah on 6th.

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

Seven at Ta'izz sewage lagoons on 5th; four in lower wadis of western ramparts on 7th.

Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii*

One at Al Jarrahi on 6th; nine at rubbish-tip near Al Qutay on 7th.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

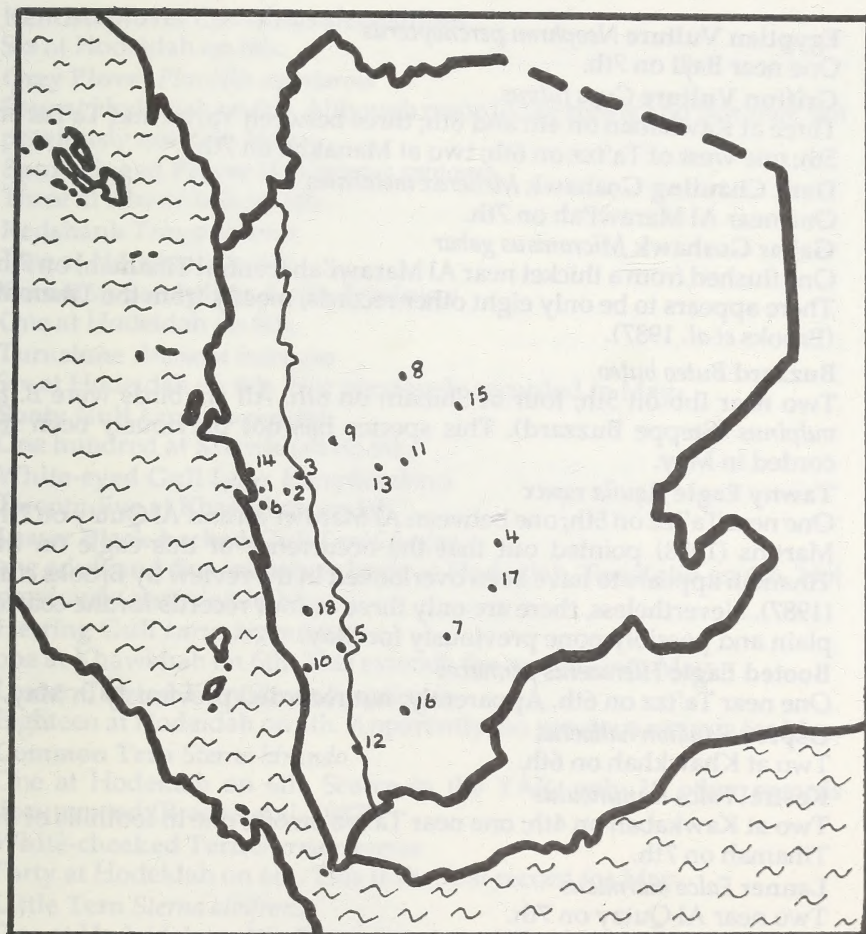
Fourteen at Khawkhah on 6th.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*

Five at Khawkhah on 6th.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Common and widespread, at least 15 seen on all days.



- | | | | |
|---|------------------|----|-----------------------|
| 1 | Al Marawi'ah | 10 | Khawkah |
| 2 | Al Qutay | 11 | Mafhaq |
| 3 | Bajil | 12 | Mafraq al Mukha |
| 4 | Dhamar | 13 | Manakha |
| 5 | Hays | 14 | Ras Katib |
| 6 | Hodeidah | 15 | Sana'a |
| 7 | Ibb | 16 | Ta'izz sewage lagoons |
| 8 | Kawkaban/Shibam | 17 | Yarim |
| 9 | Khamis Bani Sa'd | 18 | Zabid |

Map of North Yemen showing the location of sites mentioned in the text. The thinner line marks the extent of the Tihamah.

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*

One near Bajil on 7th.

Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*

Three at Kawkaban on 4th and 8th; three between Yarim and Ta'izz on 5th; one west of Ta'izz on 6th; two at Manakha on 7th.

Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates*

One near Al Marawi'ah on 7th.

Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar*

One flushed from a thicket near Al Marawi'ah (central Tihamah) on 7th. There appears to be only eight other records, mostly from the Tihamah (Brooks *et al.* 1987).

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Two near Ibb on 5th; four at Shibam on 8th. All six birds were *B. b. vulpinus* (Steppe Buzzard). This species has not previously been recorded in May.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*

One near Ta'izz on 5th; one between Al Marawi'ah and Al Qutay on 7th. Martins (1988) pointed out that the occurrence of this eagle on the Tihamah appears to have been overlooked in the review by Brooks *et al.* (1987). Nevertheless, there are only three or four records for the coastal plain and possibly none previously for May.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

One near Ta'izz on 6th. Apparently, not recorded previously in May.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Two at Khawkhah on 6th.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Two at Kawkaban on 4th; one near Ta'izz on 6th; one in foothills of the Tihamah on 7th.

Lanner *Falco biarmicus*

Two near Al Qutay on 7th.

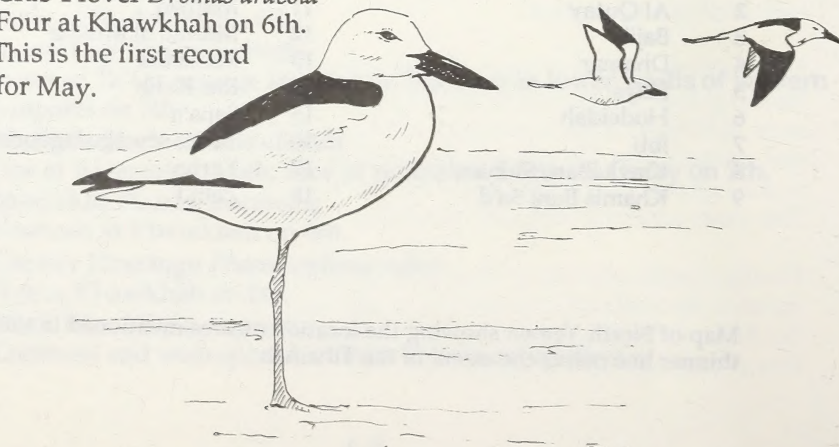
Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides*

One at Kawkaban on 4th and 8th.

Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola*

Four at Khawkhah on 6th.

This is the first record for May.



Kentish plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Six at Hodeidah on 6th.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Four at Hodeidah on 6th. Although recorded in spring and summer, not previously noted in May.

Spur-winged Plover *Hoplopterus spinosus*

Three at Khawkhah on 6th.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Two at Hodeidah on 6th.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

One at Hodeidah on 6th.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Six at Hodeidah on 6th. Not previously recorded in May.

Sooty Gull *Larus hemprichii*

One hundred at Khawkhah on 6th.

White-eyed Gull *Larus leucophthalmus*

Twenty-five at Khawkhah on 6th.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

one adult and five immature birds at Hodeidah/Ras Katib on 6th. Not previously recorded in May.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

one at Khawkhah on 6th. This extends the records into May.

Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*

Eighteen at Hodeidah on 6th. Apparently, no previous records for May.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

One at Hodeidah on 6th. Scarce in the YAR, only 10 other records documented (Brooks *et al.* 1987).

White-cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa*

Forty at Hodeidah on 6th. This is the first record for May.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

One at Hodeidah on 6th. There are great difficulties in discriminating *S. albifrons* from *S. saundersi* (see Cramp 1985), and particular care was exercised in making this identification.

Saunders' Tern *Sterna saundersi*

Seven at Hodeidah on 6th.

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus*

At least eight probable near Al Marawi'ah on 7th.

Rock Dove *Columba Livia*

Numerous at Kawkaban on 4th and 8th; common around Ta'izz on 6th.

African Collared Dove *Streptopelia roseogrisea*

At various places on the Tihamah; 15 on 16th and six on 7th.

Dusky Turtle Dove *Streptopelia lugens*

One at Ta'izz sewage lagoons on 5th.

Palm Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Seen on all days at all locations.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*

Seven at Al Marawi'ah on 7th.

Bruce's Green Pigeon *Treron waalia*

One in Sana'a on 4th.

Alpine Swift *Apus melba*

Two at Kawkaban/Shibam on 4th and eight on 8th; four between Yarim and Ta'izz on 5th; eight in western ramparts on 7th.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

Two in Sana'a and six at Kawkaban on 4th; 10 between Sana'a and Ta'izz on 5th; two in western ramparts on 7th.

Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus*

Six at various locations on the Tihamah on 6th.

Grey-headed kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala*

Three along wadi between Bajil and Khamis Bani Sa'd on 7th.

White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis*

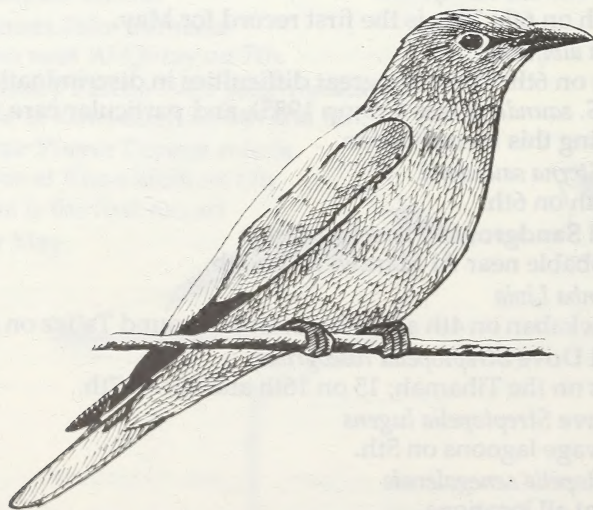
Three between Hays and hodeidah on 6th; two near Al Marawi'ah on 7th.

Little Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*

One near Yarim on 5th; 50 in highlands west of Ta'izz on 6th; 30 in western ramparts on 7th.

Roller *Coracias garrulus*

One in the Tihamah foothills near Bajil on 7th. There are only nine other records of this scarce passage migrant, and this is the first record for May.



Abyssinian Roller *Coracias abyssinicus*

Four between Hays and Hodeidah on 6th; two between Al Marawi'ah and Bajil on 7th.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Two near Ibb on 5th; one entering nest hole near Mafhaq on 7th.

Arabian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos dora*

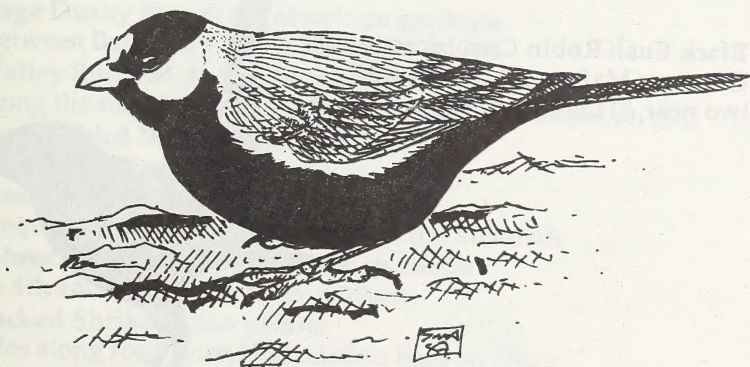
One north of Dhamar on 5th.

Singing Bush Lark *Mirafra cantillans*

Three north of Zabid on 6th; one near Al Marawi'ah on 7th.

Black-crowned Finch Lark *Eremopterix nigriceps*

Eight at Khawkhah on 6th.



Hoopoe Lark *Alaemon alaudipes*

One east of Khawkhah on 6th.

Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea*

Two on road from Sana'a to Dhamar on 5th.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

Ten between Mafraq al Mukha and Zabid on 6th; two near Shibam on 8th.

African Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula*

Three on 4th and five on 8th at Kawkaban; three near Ibb on 5th; two near Ta'izz on 6th; 15 in western ramparts on 7th.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Seen daily including five on the Tihamah on 6th; highest count, 30 in the western ramparts on 7th.

Red-rumped swallow *Hirundo daurica*

Seen daily; highest count, 25 between Sana'a and Ta'izz on 5th; two on the Tihamah on 6th.

Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis*

One on 4th and three on 8th at Shibam; six at various places between Sana'a and Ta'izz on 5th; one in western ramparts on 7th.

Yellow Wagtail *motacilla flava*

Nine at different locations on the Tihamah on 6th. Not previously recorded in May.

Yellow-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus xanthopygos*

Recorded in many locations on all days.

Arabian Accentor *Prunella fagani*

Two at Sumarah Pass on 5th; and one at Kawkaban on 8th.

Black Bush Robin *Cercotrichas podobe*

One near Maфраq al Mukha on 6th;
two near Al Qutay on 7th.



Blackstart *Cercomela melanura*

One at Ta'izz sewage lagoon on 5th; two between Hays and Hodeidah on 6th; nine along road from Hodeidah to Khamis bani Sa'd on 7th.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Five on road from Sana'a to Ta'izz on 5th; one near Mafhaq on 7th.

Red-breasted Wheatear *Oenanthe bottae*

Three on 4th and one on 8th at Shibam; five on road from Sana'a to Ta'izz on 5th; one near Ta'izz on 6th.

South Arabian Wheatear *Oenanthe lugentoides*

Three on 4th and five on 8th at Shibam; two near Ta'izz on 5th; six in the western ramparts on 7th.

Little Rock Thrush *Monticola rufocinerea*

One at Kawkaban on 8th.

Graceful Warbler *Prinia gracilis*

Two in Sana'a on 4th.

Scrub Warbler *Scotocerca inquieta*

One near Mafhaq on 7th.

Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida*

One near Bajil on 7th.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

One near Mafraq al Mukha on 6th and one near Al Marawi'ah on 7th.

These are the first records for May.

Brown Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus umbrovirens*

One on 4th and eight on 8th at Kawkaban.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

One near Bajil on 7th.

Gambage Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa gambagae*

Two between Bajil and Khamis Bani Sa'd on 7th.

Nile Valley Sunbird *Anthreptes metallicus*

Five along the road between Mafraq al Mukha and Zabid on 6th.

Shining Sunbird *Nectarinia habessinica*

One female near Bajil on 7th.

Palestine Sunbird *Nectarinia osea*

Seen frequently in many areas except on the Tihamah.

White-breasted White-eye *Zosterops abyssinica*

One on 4th and five on 8th at Kawkaban.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Six males along road from Hodeidah to Bajil on 7th.

House Crow *Corvus splendens*

Twelve at Khawkhah and four at Hodeidah on 6th.

Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis*

Common in all areas visited and seen daily.

Fan-tailed Raven *Corvus rhipidurus*

Seen daily and common in all areas visited except the Tihamah.

Tristram's Grackle *Onychognathus tristramii*

Seen daily and common in all areas visited except the Tihamah.

Amethyst Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*

Flock of seven (six males and one female) near Khamis Bani Sa'd on 7th.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Numerous and widespread in towns and villages.

Arabian Golden Sparrow *Passer euchlorus*

Seven on 6th between Zabid and Hodeidah; 20 near Al Qutay on 7th.

Rüppell's Weaver *Ploceus galbula*

Nine between Sana'a and Ta'izz on 5th; four near Khuzayjah on 6th and many on western ramparts on 7th.

Arabian Waxbill *Estrilda rufibarba*

Two near Al Marawi'ah on 7th.

African Silverbill *Euodice cantans*

Twenty-five in lower wadis of western ramparts on 7th.

Arabian Serin *Serinus rothschildi*

Four near Shibam on 4th; 12 on hillsides north-west of Sana'a on 8th.

Yemen Serin *Serinus menachensis*

Common in highlands only, with daily counts of 25-30. Around Shibam on 4th and 8th; between Sana'a and Ta'izz on 5th (with several singing); in higher regions of western ramparts on 7th.

Golden-winged Grosbeak *Rhynchostruthus socotranus*

Two, 10 km north-west of Sana'a on 4th.



Yemen Linnet *Carduelis yemenensis*

Fairly common in all highland areas visited; highest daily count, 50 along Sana'a to Shibam road on 4th.

African Rock Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi*

Four seen above 3000 m on Jabal an Nabi Shu'ayb on 7th.

References

BROOKS, D J, EVANS, M I, MARTINS, R P and PORTER, R F (1987). The status of birds in North Yemen and the records of OSME Expedition in Autumn 1985. *Sandgrouse* 9: 4-66.

CRAMP, S (ed.) (1985) *The Birds of the Western Palearctic* Vol.4. Oxford.

MARTINS, R (1988) April bird observations in the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen), 1987. *OSME Bull* 21: 1-9.

CWT Pilcher and G Gregory, *Faculty of medicine, P O Box 24923, Safat 13110, Kuwait*

Dotterels in Bahrain, winter 1988/89

Tom Nightingale

Introduction

This paper considers the occurrence, habitat preferences and observation of Dotterels *Charadrius morinellus* in Bahrain during Winter 1988/89.

The wintering grounds of the Dotterel are understood to extend in a relatively narrow band from Morocco to northern Saudi Arabia, Iraq and western Iran. Dotterels are rare winter visitors to the Arabian Gulf States, and have been recorded in small numbers from Kuwait, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. Their nearest known wintering grounds to Bahrain are on the plains of the Dibdibah in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, approximately 450 km northwest of Bahrain island (Palfrey 1986).

Previous records

Prior to the winter of 1988/89, there were only three records of Dotterel in Bahrain:

- One at a sewage stream West Rifaa during 15-20 December 1970;
- Seven near Hamalah on 28 December 1983 (sand desert and rimrock);
- Two near Hamad Town on 25 January 1984 (sand and stone desert and limestone outcrops).

These areas are in the west and northwest of the central region.

Records in winter 1988/89

Dotterels appeared in unprecedented numbers in this winter. They were recorded as follows:

- One at Dumistan pools on 31 October 1988 (inland saline water, sand-bars and sparse vegetation). Northwest Bahrain.
- 13 to 27 at Qurayyah during 26 December-25 March. Northwest Bahrain.
- Two at a small sewage dump in the desert southeast of Awali, 27 January -20 February 1989. Central Bahrain.
- Two and then one at Al Meerouge Farm during 20 February-2 April. West Bahrain.
- Six at Saar burial mounds in the third week of February. Northwest Bahrain.

Taking Qurayyah as a focal point and treating the Dumistan record as of a passage bird, the distances from Qurayyah to these locations are:

- Sewage dump 16.5 km southeast.
- Al Meerouge Farm 15.5 km south.
- Saar 2 km east.

A report of 11 Dotterels on recently cleared and levelled land in a compound at Dhahran, eastern Saudi Arabia, on 18 November 1988 is interesting, with five remaining there the next day. Dhahran is approximately 40 km northwest of Qurayyah.

Habitats

The Qurrayah site embraces two farms approximately 30 hectares in area. It consists of intensive irrigated alfalfa *Medicago sativa* cultivation, vegetable gardens in desert scrub and abandoned gardens, recently ploughed and levelled, resulting in a thinly vegetated, small sand desert with a few small rocks. Bordered by housing to the north and east, the area (which is almost treeless) boasts a wide variety of birds in most seasons.

The sewage dump is a small area (less than half a hectare) in sand desert with some low vegetation.

The Al Meerouge Dairy Farm near Zallaq is approximately 20 hectares of intensive irrigated alfalfa cultivation, and a few groves of young date palms in sand desert.

The Saar burial mounds cover an area of approximately 210 hectares, consisting of a complex of ancient stone burial mounds in sparsely vegetated and thinly grassed sand and stone desert.

Observations

A shortage of available observers hampered observations. For instance, no attempt was made to observe roosting habits. This section summarises the observations made at the various localities.



Qurrayah

Thirteen Dotterels were first seen on 26 December, standing in the open desert. Close approach on foot was not possible, the birds walking ahead of watchers before taking flight into the cover of cultivation on a neighbouring farm 300 m to the north. On 27 and 28 December, days of reduced visibility and strong north winds, eight were found crouching

for cover behind low vegetation and small rocks in the desert area. Close approach was possible by vehicle, and the birds were seen feeding on plants, predominantly salt-loving species such as *Sesuvium verrucosum*, *Heliotropium kotschi* and *Salsola baryosma*. On 4 January, 13 birds were seen in flight over the northern farm. On 8 February, five were standing in the desert area; the next day 23 were there in a loose flock in the desert. They eventually flew into the north farm and were not seen feeding.

On 10 February, the desert area was empty and as visiting watchers were twitching, the north farm was penetrated (much to the amusement and amazement of the gardeners) by camera and binocular-laden expatriates. This foray nearly drew a blank until, as a final resort, we checked the beds of alfalfa. Here, in one small bed we found 23 Dotterels which permitted our approach on foot up to 2 m. Thereafter, occasional visits were made to these birds. The Dotterels fed on the leaves and crowns of the alfalfa and were always found in the beds of half-grown plants, the alfalfa being just below their head height, convenient for feeding and maintaining a lookout. This made finding them fairly easy, for we were able to eliminate all beds of mature crop from our searches. Here, very close approach was usually tolerated, in contrast to our stealthy efforts in the desert area. On occasions, the flock would, if disturbed, fly a short distance to open ground, before quickly returning (usually by foot) to their feeding area in the alfalfa. They were also seen feeding to a lesser extent on insects, by probing the sand of the alfalfa beds.

On 14 February three were seen in the adjacent small desert area, while 24, the highest count we achieved, were in the alfalfa bed. On 25 March, the last day that they were recorded at Qurrayah, 22 Dotterels were seen. Over their three-month stay, the majority of their daytime was spent amongst the alfalfa, their movements for the most part apparently confined to an area of no more than one hectare.

Sewage dump

There were two Dotterels from 27 January until 20 February. They were usually next to low vegetation, predominantly the weed *Chenopodium murale* and the common shrub *Zygophyllum qatarense*. In four visits, feeding was not observed.

Al Meerouge Dairy Farm

Two Dotterels were present from 20 February until 23 March with one of the birds remaining until 2 April; their feeding habits were similar to those of the Qurrayah birds.

Saar burial mounds

Six Dotterels were seen one evening during the third week of February, roosting on the ground. It is possible that these birds were from the flock at Qurrayah, 2 km distant.

Other species

The Skylark *Alauda arvensis* is a winter visitor to some of the cultivated areas of Bahrain, and flocks of up to thirty were seen at all locations where Dotterels were present. Likewise, during winter, Water Pipits *Anthus spinoletta* and White Wagtails *Motacilla alba* can be found in Bahrain's alfalfa cultivation, the latter species usually quite numerous. The farms at Qurrayah are attractive to many birds. During the period of the Dotterels' stay one or two Grey Plovers *Pluvialis squatarola* were seen there; as was a Golden Plover *P. apricaria*, a scarce bird in the Gulf now reinstated on the Bahrain list after this sighting. During January, a flock of Cream-coloured Coursers *Cursorius cursor* visited the small desert area, but none of these larger birds was seen in close association with the Dotterels.

Palfrey (1986) mentions the occurrence of migratory flocks of Caspian Plovers *Charadrius asiaticus* passing through the Dibdibah in spring. This species is an uncommon migrant through Bahrain. Interestingly, it was recorded at both Al Meerouge and Qurrayah during late March 1989 (15 at Qurrayah on 31 March); and one was seen at the small sewage dump in March 1988.

Previously, migrating Stone-curlews *Burhinus oedicnemus* have been found roosting at the Saar burial mounds and Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* and Houbara *Chlamydotis undulata* were seen here during November 1988.

Influxes, usually small, of uncommon or rare wintering birds are a feature of the ornithology of the Arabian Gulf. For example, during January and February 1989 an influx of Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis* was noted in the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Reasons for these influxes are unclear.

Discussion

The rainfall in Bahrain and the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia was lower than average for the winter of 1988/89, and yet a Dotterel was seen in Jebel Ali UAE, 450 km southeast of Bahrain as early as 7 October 1988. This species does occasionally extend its passage or wanders. For example, two were seen on Das Island, 250 km southeast of Bahrain during August 1987, a very early date for such a southerly occurrence. From Oman, there is an unconfirmed record of two Dotterels on board a ship in the Arabian Sea approximately 80 km east of Masirah Island during April 1960.

Alfalfa appears to be an important source of food for wintering Dotterels, in areas where alternative food is inferior or scarce. It is tempting to speculate that other areas of alfalfa cultivation in Bahrain may have held wintering Dotterels.

Apart from a severe sandstorm on 10 March, no adverse weather conditions were experienced by these Dotterels during their stay in Bahrain.

Encouragingly they were ignored by the gardeners and were for the most part extremely approachable.

The majority of the birds appeared to be adult, and traces of breeding plumage were attained during their last days in Bahrain.

Acknowledgments

I should like to thank Sheika Noorah Al Khalifa for permitting unrestricted access to her farms at Qurrayah and Al Meerouge, and Mrs Diana Phillips for identifying plant specimens. My thanks as always to FE Warr and Mike Jennings for Gulf and Saudi Arabian records.

References

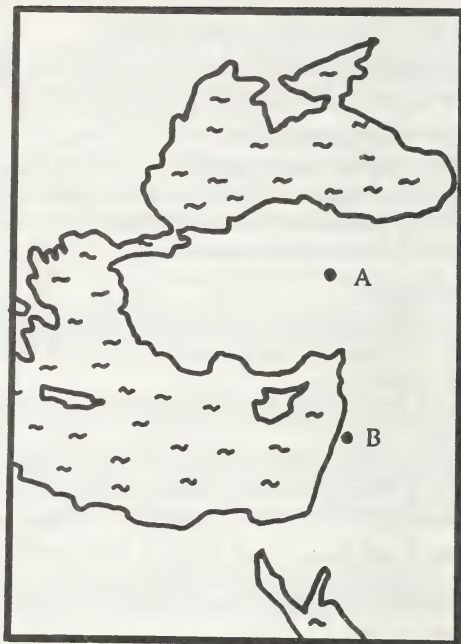
- Bahrain Natural History Society. Bird Records 1976-1988.
BUNDY, G, CONNOR, R and HARRISON, C 1989. *Birds of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia*. London.
CRAMP, S & SIMMONS, KEL (eds) 1983. *The birds of the Western Palearctic*, Vol 3. Oxford.
GALLAGHER, M and WOODCOCK, M 1980. *The Birds of Oman*. London.
PALFREY, J 1986. Dotterel wintering in Saudi Arabia. *Sandgrouse* 8:112.
RICHARDSON, C 1986-1989. Dubai (later) Emirates Bird Report 1-7.
ROGERS, T and GALLAGHER, M 1973. Birds of Bahrain. Private circulation.
Tom Nightingale, 102 Denmark Street, Diss, Norfolk IP22 3LF, UK

The rapid movement of a Turkish-ringed Wryneck to Beirut, Lebanon

Vincent van den Berk

On 10 October 1988, a Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* with Radolfzell ring DH 83 264, was recovered from Beirut, Lebanon (33°53'N-35°30'E). It had been shot. This bird was ringed only eight days previously, on 2 October 1988, in the garden complex of the village of Cavlak (39°00'N-35°47'E), bordering Lake Palas (or Lake Tuzla), Kayseri province, Central Anatolia. The distance between these locations is about 600 km.

During an autumn survey at this lake from 28 September to 10 October 1988, Wrynecks were recorded daily up to 3 October. On 29 September, one was seen in a small field of sunflower stems on the otherwise bare plain, and two or three were seen in the garden complex of Cavlak. The following day, one was heard calling there (*contra* Cramp 1985: 'silent on migration'). We caught and ringed singles there with only a few mistnets on the first three days of October. Afterwards, Wrynecks were not recorded again; there might have been a considerable passage pulse during a relative short period.



Map showing the ringing site (A) and recovery site (B) of Wryneck number DH 83 264.

These autumn records are interesting. Porter (1983) commented on the relative absence of Wrynecks in autumn 1966 at the Bosphorus, and Albrecht (1986) did not find any in autumn 1976 and 1977 (in contrast with spring) at Ereğli, in the Black Sea Coastlands. On Cyprus, it is a common passage migrant in spring, but less common in autumn (Flint and Stewart 1983). The Turkish Bird Reports and *Birds of Turkey* series also give fewer records for autumn than for spring. One wonders if these figures reflect the real migration pattern of this species through the eastern Mediterranean.

Our caught Wrynecks, one first year and two fullgrown birds, belonged to the nominate subspecies with unbroken dark bars on the throat. They possibly belonged to the Soviet population. The nominate race predominantly migrates into Africa and winters south of the Sahara (Cramp 1985). The recovered bird was in a very good migration condition when ringed on 2 October, with a flat score of 4 (Busse 1974).

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank Wouter Helmer, Uygur Özemesi, Gürdogar Sarigül, Naomi Stuijver and René Vos for taking part in this autumn survey of Lake Palas. René Vos and C S Roselaar helped me out with subspecific identification, and R Schlenker, Vogelwarte Radolfzell, is thanked for providing rings.

References

- ALBRECHT, J S M 1986. Notes on the Birds of Eregli, Black Sea Coastlands, Turkey 1976-1978. *Sandgrouse* 8:74-92.
- BUSSE, P 1974. Biometrical Methods. *Notatki Orn.* 15:114-126.
- CRAMP, S (ed.) 1985. *The Birds of the Western Palearctic* Vol. 4. Oxford.
- FLINT, P R & Stewart, P F 1983. *The Birds of Cyprus*. London.
- PORTER, R F 1983. The Autumn Migration of Passerines Near-Passerines at the Bosphorus, Turkey. *Sandgrouse* 5:45-74.

Vincent Van Den Berk, Noordereind 3A,
NL-4012 BT Kerk Awezaath, The Netherlands

News and Information

Compiled by Simon Albrecht

The aim of this section is to inform readers about events in the OSME region. It is not intended as a definitive report or write up of the projects concerned. Most of the projects are sponsored; such support is appreciated but is not generally given acknowledgment here.

Yemen Arab republic

Information supplied by Mike Rands
There have been a number of conservation developments in the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) following the OSME Expedition there in 1985 and a number of subsequent visits by OSME members.

Species conservation Full legal protection has now been given to the 24 species recommended for protection in the Expedition report. This includes the 13 species endemic to the southwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula, as well as endangered migrant species like Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* and Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris*. The birds are now protected from direct threats like persecution; but not indirect threats like loss of habitat. Nevertheless, the legislation is a considerable achievement and we congratulate the North Yemen government.

Habitat conservation and site protection

The OSME Expedition report recommended the habitats and localities of table 1 as a preliminary list for a Protected Areas Network which would allow the wildlife and human interest in the areas to develop in sympathy with each other.

The land ownership system in Yemen makes it very difficult to create a network of protected areas. Local opposition is such that any imposition of protection would be completely ineffective. There have, however, been some attempts to create some protected areas, and OSME and IUCN have proposed Jebel Bura. The Yemeni government has expressed interest, but as yet has been unable to do very much. Aid agencies, too, have expressed interest in habitat protection in the context of sustainable development; but there is still a long way to go before any habi-

Table 1. OSME Expedition report recommendations for Protected Areas Network in the Yemen Arab Republic

Region	Habitats	Localities
Coastal	Offshore islands	Coast north of Ra's Katanib
	Mangroves	Wadi Siham estuary
	Mudflats	Wadi Rima estuary
Tihamah	Sandy wadis	Wadis north of Suq'Abs
	<i>Acacia/Commiphora</i> bushland	Heavy cultivation Wadi Mawr; cultivation between Al Qutay' and foot of Jabal Bura'
	Dobera parkland	Area around Al Kadan
Tihamah foothills	Valley forest	Jabal Bura'
Highlands	Wadi forests	Wadi Duba
	Wetlands	Hidhran Marshes; wadis between Jabal Sabir and Wadi Thabad including Ta'izz sewage lagoons
	<i>Euphorbia/Acacia</i> scrub	<i>Euphorbia/Acacia</i> scrub north of Ta'izz
	Relict <i>Acacia</i> woodland	Slopes east of Al Mahwit
	High escarpment ravines	Shibam/Kawkaban escarpment
	High mountain tops	Jabal an Nabi Shu'ayb
	Juniper forests	?

tats are protected. There is real concern that some of these sites may be lost before they can be effectively protected: the wetlands around Ta'izz are particularly threatened.

Bald Ibis Several expedition members have returned to Yemen and added valuable bird records. Of particular

interest are further records of Bald Ibis from the region where the expedition found them. There has also been an unconfirmed report of breeding from farther north. The status of Bald Ibis in the Arabian Peninsula is unclear, and further survey work is urgently needed, particularly now that the wild

Turkish population at Birecik has gone extinct. (See details under Turkey and Morocco.)

Education Following his visit to Britain in 1987 when he attended the International Centre for Conservation Education (ICCE) conservation education training course, Jamil Al-Ba'dani has been giving a series of lectures on Yemen's bird life, using a series of slides prepared at ICCE. An educational book on the birds of Yemen (see *Bulletin* 20:59) is now nearing completion, and it is hoped that it will be produced with sponsorship later this year.

Environmental Protection Council An Environmental Protection Council was formed in 1989 under the Ministry of Municipalities. The Council works across various ministries, and has six committees covering, amongst others, environmental education, industrial pollution and toxic waste. There is no committee clearly dealing with rural environmental issues, nor is wildlife or nature conservation explicit in the Council's remit. It is not clear how the Council will develop, or what it will achieve: at present it has no staff. The Environmental Education Committee is considering running a conservation seminar with the aim of making Yemen's decision makers aware of the environmental problems and possible solutions. We look forward to being able to report on the Council's development and activities in future.

Egypt

First nature reserve Egypt is about to establish its first nature reserve, at the southern tip of the Sinai peninsula. The Ras Muhamniad National Park is an important migration point for storks and raptors, and local mangroves are important for waders and herons.

Cattle Egrets at Giza Zoo The trees adjacent to Giza Zoo contain an enormous colony of 2-3,000 pairs of nesting Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis*. Unfortunately, some local people wanted the colony moved because of the mess and disturbance it causes them. Cattle Egrets are one of the most well-known protected birds in Egypt, and are regarded as 'friends to the farmers' because of the large number of insects that they eat. The authorities started felling the trees, but this was halted following an outcry in the press and letters from OSME, OSE and others to the Ministry of Environmental Affairs. We congratulate the minister, Dr Atif Abeid, on his swift response. There is now a committee with non-governmental organisation representation to manage the colony, but there is still talk of trying to move the colony elsewhere. Any alternative site could be worse both for the birds and people; so there is need for further study including an environmental impact assessment before any attempted move is made.

Falcons for sale Although all birds of prey are protected by law in Egypt, hundreds of falcons have been found for sale in the markets of North Sinai. In El Arish, Kestrels *Falco tinnunculus* sell for about five and Red-footed Falcons *F. vespertinus* for about 10 Egyptian pounds each (about US \$1.50-\$5.00). These are used both as 'pets' and to capture Peregrines *F. peregrinus* which can fetch up to US \$20,000. The capture technique was apparently developed for field research by Cornell University, and has recently arrived in Egypt from Qatar. This flouting of the law has been brought to the attention of the Governor of North Sinai and the local environmental protection authorities, who have said that they will try to enforce the law during next autumn's migration season. We look forward to being able to report their success in a future bulletin.

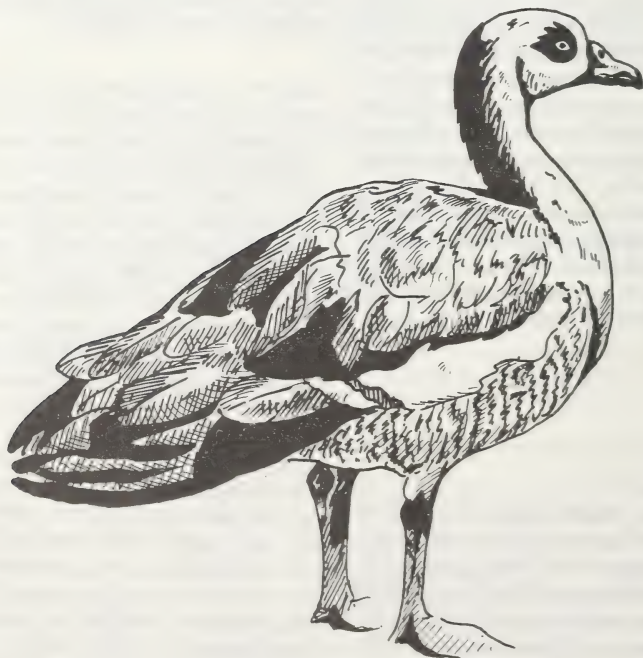
More shooting tours from Malta We have previously reported shooting package tours from Malta to Egypt (*Bulletin* 22:45). This has continued in spite of the threat that it poses to Egyptian wildlife. In the 1989/90 winter season, at least 25 companies were operating 'sport hunting holidays', and nearly 700 gun permits had been issued for foreign hunters at the time of writing. The Ornithological Society of Egypt (OSE), following a letter writing campaign, has had a meeting with Mr Ali Hamdi who is in charge of the environment under the Minister of Tourism, Mr Fuad Sultan. A ban on Maltese hunters and tighter regulations on hunting are promised for next winter. We congratulate the Ministry on its swift action and look forward to reporting its success.

Egyptian Geese at Lake Nasser Egyptian hunters have reported thousands of

dead ducks and geese (including Egyptian Geese *Alopochen aegyptiacus*) around Lake Nasser. This follows reports of agricultural trials involving use of pesticides. We do not know if there is any causal relation between the reports and are awaiting further details.

Ornithological Society of Egypt

Membership of the society costs US \$10 per year, for which members receive a copy of the journal *Courser*, and a car sticker. If anyone is visiting Egypt, they are welcome to contact the society for information or to submit records. Letters should be addressed to Sherif or Mindy Baha El Din, Ornithological Society of Egypt, Executive Business Services, Cairo Marriott Hotel, P O Box 33, Zamalek, Cairo, Egypt.



Phoenix

We have recently received issue number 6 of *Phoenix*, the newsletter of the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Arabia. This is an essential publication for everyone interested in the birds of the Arabian Peninsula. In addition to updating knowledge of the distribution of breeding birds, it is full of interesting information on bird sightings and developments in the region. Numbers 1-6 are available at £2 each and the next five (7-11) can be subscribed to for a total of £15 (\$30). Further information and a free issue of *Phoenix* is available from, and subscriptions payable to: Michael Jennings, Co-ordinator, ABBA, Moonraker Cottage, 1 Eastcourt, Burbage, Wiltshire SN8 3AG, UK.

Slender-billed Curlew project

We have recently heard of an unconfirmed report of sightings of Slender-billed Curlews in Oman; further details are awaited. Any records (including relevant negative ones) should be sent to Adam Gretton, ICBP, 32 Cambridge Road, Girton, Cambridge CB3 0PJ, UK.

Turkey

Göksü Delta In the last *Bulletin* (23:39), we reported that the Göksü Delta was still under threat from a number of developments. In November 1988, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Turkey (DHKD) discovered a holiday

Purple Gallinule, Göksü Delta, Turkey. This is the only known breeding site in the country for the species (*Photograph G Magnin*)



Göksü Delta, Turkey, September 1988 (*Photograph C Tucker*)



resort under construction between the two main lakes in the delta. In March 1989, they discovered that an airport was planned for the delta; and in July 1989 that a large shrimp farm was planned for the southwest tip of the delta. Following concerted lobbying by DHKD, OSME, ICBP and others, together with the active interest taken by the Turkish press, these projects have apparently now been dropped, and the resort construction has finally stopped. Moreover, on 1st December 1989, the Göksü Delta became Turkey's fourth Specially Protected Area. The purpose of these areas is to ensure that conservation and development take place together. DHKD will now be involved in developing a management plan for the area. We congratulate the Minister of state, the Undersecretariat of the Environment and the Directorate of Specially Protected Areas for their wise decision to protect the Göksü Delta.

Bald Ibis at Birecik Last spring, we reported plans to improve the breeding success of the wild population of the Bald Ibis at Birecik (*Bulletin* 22:47). We

regret to have to report that these plans were not fulfilled, and that the wild Turkish population appears to be effectively extinct.

Two wild birds returned to Birecik in mid-March and were followed some ten days later by a third. Two formed a pair, nested in one of the nestboxes provided, and laid an unknown number of eggs. The third remained single, not pairing with captive-bred birds released in the area. In April, one of the pair, together with the single wild bird, became lost during a storm. One of these birds was subsequently found with burns on its body indicating a collision with power lines. The remaining wild bird abandoned the nestbox, and its fate is unknown since it is indistinguishable from the released captive-bred birds.

In February 1989, there were 44 birds in captivity in Birecik, of which 14 were breeding adults and the remaining 30 immatures from one to three years old. These 30 immatures were released in early March to join two birds that had been present all winter from previous

Hand-reared Bald Ibises being fed by the warden, Birecik, Turkey, September 1988 (*Photograph* C Tucker)



releases. The remaining seven pairs in captivity bred, raising a total of 15 young.

Of the 30 young birds released, three died within a few days and a fourth died in April. Some of the released birds were sexually mature and six pairs were formed. On 5th May, there were two nests on rock ledges, each with two young, and four nests in nest-boxes each with at least one young. By 22nd May, however, all the nestboxes had been abandoned, and one young had been lost from a ledge nest. In total, three young were fledged, and the feral population at the end of the 1989 breeding season was 31.

Following the demise of the wild population, DHKD now recommend that the release of captive bred stock be abandoned, and the feral population outside the cages be no longer supported. Successful migration and survival of the wild population depended on the young learning from their parents. With the absence of any wild adults, the feral population can never migrate and become truly wild. It is therefore considered better to maintain the numbers and the genetic diversity of the existing captive stock in co-operation with international zoos. (Information from Dogal Hayati Korumu Dernegi)

Morocco

Bald Ibis We have recently heard from Udo Hirsch about the Moroccan population of Bald Ibis, which is also seriously threatened. Only two areas are apparently used for breeding and wintering, and the total population is now less than 180 birds. The reasons for this decline are unspecified apart from drastic changes in the feeding habitat of the birds. There seem little prospect for effective legal protection and so the Moroccan population too may soon be extinct. We have been promised further information during the year.

Israel

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) is expressing concern over the building of a massive broadcasting station by the voice of America, in the Negev Desert. This concern centres on two main features: over 800 ha of open desert will be covered by the transmission station; and the effect of the total of 8,000,000 Watts radiation from the plant on the millions of migratory birds which pass through the area is unknown. For further details, please write to Dr Ron Frumkin, Israel Ornithological Centre, 155 Herzl St., Tel Aviv 68101, Israel.

North Cyprus

Conservation awareness campaign

North Cyprus has been isolated from regional and international conservation activities since the political unrest in 1974, which led to the occupation of the region by Turkish troops. Therefore, a growing need to come up with conservation measures, specifically for birds, has built up. ICBP has launched a twelve-month campaign from October 1989 to promote bird conservation. The old English hunting law, which is still in existence, has a very severe impact on both migratory birds and birds of prey because it allows a spring shooting season. In practice, there are effectively two spring seasons: January/February for early migrants and waterbirds; and in April/May. As a result, millions of migratory birds are killed each year, and Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* has been almost exterminated.

The conservation campaign has been designed to improve the situation for these birds and is divided into four parts: conservation of migratory birds, which includes an education campaign using the DHKD-ICBP booklet for primary schools, a slide show, presentations in the village, mobile exhibitions and field work to assess the methods and extent of the killing; conserva-

tion of birds of prey, which includes a census of Griffon Vultures and a poster campaign to create awareness amongst hunters and shepherds; a wetland inventory to establish both permanent and seasonal water bodies and their use by migrating birds; and initial support for the local conservation

group KKDCCKH, which it is hoped will take over conservation activities in the long term. Publicity and field work are taking place until the end of June, and the rest of the time will be used for analysing the results and producing a report.

WIWO Reports

OSME members will be well aware of the work carried out by the Foundation Working Group for International Wader and Waterfowl Research (WIWO) within the OSME region. Their reports have many times been featured in the OSME *Bulletin*, and the following is a list of those which are still available.

- Berk, V van den, Bijlsma, R G & Roder, F E de 1985. The importance of some wetlands in Turkey for transient and wintering birds in Turkey. WIWO-report 6, Zeist, The Netherlands. Df1. 10,-.
- Berk, V van den, Dorp, D van, Hoorn, O van & Vos, R 1986. Cranes and waterfowl counts of some Turkish wetlands. WIWO-report 10, Zeist, The Netherlands. Df1. 7,50.
- Dijk, A J van, Dijk, K van, Dijkse, L, Spanje, T van & Wymenga, E 1986. Wintering waders and waterfowl in the of Gulf of Gabès, Tunisia, January-March 1984. WIWO-report 11, Zeist, The Netherlands. Df1. 30,-.
- Dijkse, L J & Blomert, A-M 1989. Mid-winter waterfowl census Turkey January 1989. WIWO-report 31, Zeist, The Netherlands. Df1 7,50.
- Dijkse, L J & Blomert, A-M Chr 1988. mid-winter waterfowl census Turkey January 1988. WIWO-report 21, Zeist, The Netherlands. Df1. 7,50.
- Dijkse, L J & Koning, F J 1986. Mid-winter waterfowl census, Turkey 1986. WIWO-report 13, Zeist, The Netherlands. Df1. 10,-.
- Dijkse, L J & Wolf, P van der 1987. Mid-winter waterfowl census Turkey January 1987. WIWO-report 18, Zeist, The Netherlands. Df1. 7,50.
- Have, T M van der, Berk, V M van den, Cronau, J P & Langeveld, M J (eds.) 1988. South Turkey Project. A survey of waders and waterfowl in the Çukurova deltas, spring 1987. WIWO-report 22, Zeist, The Netherlands. Df1. 20,-.
- Lensink, R 1987. Notes on the birds of some wetlands in North-East Greece and Turkey. WIWO-report 19, Zeist, The Netherlands. Df1. 7,50.
- Roder, F E de 1985. Waterbirds on some Turkish wetlands, October/November 1983. WIWO-report 5, Zeist, The Netherlands. Df1. 8,-.
- Schilperoord, L & Schilperoord-Huisman, M 1986. Observations of waterbirds in some wetlands in Turkey, July / August 1986. WIWO-report 14, Zeist, The Netherlands. Df1. 7,50.
- Winden, A van, Mostert, K, Ruiters, P, Siki, M & Waard, H de 1989. Waders and waterfowl in spring 1988 at Eber Gölü. WIWO-report nr. 28, Zeist, The Netherlands. Df1. 10,-.

Reports can be ordered by paying to postal giro account 2.666.009 or to ABN bank account 57.02.16.613 of Stichting WIWO, Ewijk, The Netherlands. Postage is included in all prices.

Letters

The extinction of the Bald Ibis in Turkey

It is sad to reflect that the extinction of the Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* has been staring conservationists in the face for about 40 years. The best efforts of many concerned conservationists over many years have failed to save the Birecik population in Turkey and it seems that the moroccan population is going the same way. The presence of wild birds in north Yemen suggest that there is, or has been until recently, another breeding site in the Middle East - one currently unknown to birdwatchers. Our generation of conservationists and birdwatchers is faced with bird extinctions and loss of habitat to an unprecedented extent. Clearly, the methods employed in the case of the Bald Ibis in Turkey have failed. It is time that the international conservation community critically examined both the theory and practice of our current conservation effort.

Much time and vast sums of money have been spent on survey work and scientific research, both of which are vital to successful conservation. In my view, however, conservationists have yet to grasp the equal importance of education in both its broadest and narrowest sense. Most decision makers and most ordinary people have not got the first idea why it is important to conserve a bird like the Bald Ibis or an area like the Göksü Delta for both the economic and cultural sustainable development of their country. Most of those who do think it important have neither the knowledge or expertise to do it effectively. It follows that an enormous education programme is required for decision makers and land managers, as well as public opinion. The reality is that most conservation organisations devote an insignificant proportion of their budget (certainly when compared with research) to education. Unless there are significant changes in this approach, I suspect that conservationists will be in for a lot more shocks as we enter the 21st century. Further comment on this view is welcomed.

Simon Albrecht, 12 Hemmingford Road, Cambridge CB1 3BZ, UK

The winter quarters of migratory Dead Sea Sparrows

What happens to the breeding population of the Dead Sea Sparrow *Passer moabiticus moabiticus* in Israel and Turkey in the non-breeding season?

The small breeding population of *moabiticus* in Cyprus disappears from



Lake Akrotiri after breeding and does not appear again until the following April. Similarly, I have looked for Dead Sea Sparrows in Israel in October and, apart from one small flock in the Hula Reserve, failed to find any after a very extensive search over the whole of Israel. It appears in reasonable numbers in Eilat from January to April, according to reports from the ringing station. Otherwise, apart from a few isolated records outside the breeding season, its whereabouts do not appear to be known.

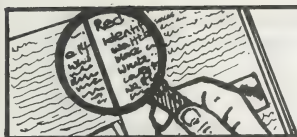
It is now a fairly common bird in Israel, and I find it unlikely that it could be overlooked if substantial numbers remained; however, enquiries to Mike Jennings have drawn a blank, and John Ash makes no mention of it in his extensive study of Ethiopia. Where do they go?

Nothing seems to be published about the extensive breeding population in Turkey. Are they resident, or do they move into the Tigris-Euphrates valley, where they could well pass unnoticed and unrecorded? Could the latter be a wintering place for the Israeli birds?

Oddly enough, much more is known about the wintering behaviour of the middle Asian population, *P. moabiticus yatii*, that breeds in Sistan and moves in winter both south to Baluchistan and north in small numbers up the Farad Rud.

If anyone can throw any light on any of these questions, I would greatly appreciate their writing to me.

J Denis Summers-Smith, Merlewood, The Avenue, Guisborough, Cleveland TS14 8EE, England



Reviews

Marine Turtles - Turkey. Status survey 1988 and recommendations for conservation and management. By Ibrahim Baran and Max Kasparek, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). May 1989. In English. Available from Max Kasparek, Bleich Str. 1, 6900 Heidelberg, West Germany. Price DM 45. Separate summary and recommendations in English and Turkish also available.

During the summer of 1988, some 2,500 km of Aegean and Mediterranean coast were surveyed for nesting sea turtles. Virtually every beach between Kusadasi and the Syrian border was visited (over 600 km of beach). Of these, about a quarter had significant populations of nesting Loggerhead *Caretta caretta* (nesting throughout the range from Dalyan in the west) or Green Turtles, *Chelonia mydas* (found on three beaches east of the Göksü Delta). The report identifies 13 major nesting beaches in Turkey and a further four important beaches. Turkey holds by far the largest known populations of both species in the Mediterranean, and therefore has great responsibility for their conservation.

This is a most valuable report for everyone interested in the wildlife and conservation of Turkey's Aegean and Mediterranean beaches. The annex to the report (some 80 pages) includes a description, land use, pollution and protection status and the use by turtles and other wildlife (including birds) of every beach between Kusadasi and the Syrian border. The report itself (34 pages including references) outlines the biology of marine turtles and the natural and human factors affecting their distribution in the eastern Mediterranean. It provides convincing evidence that while hunting may have been an important factor in their decline (and that both species should be given full protection including a ban on the sale of shells) the main threat now comes from uncontrolled holiday developments on their nesting beaches. Industrial and sewage pollution are also major threats in certain areas, as is sand extraction (for the new holiday houses) and shrimp trawling east of the Göksü delta. The report makes it clear that there is room for development alongside conservation, but that this requires careful planning, adequate resources and, most importantly, full consultation with local people whose co-operation is essential for successful conservation.

In 1988, Turkey established three Special Protection Areas under the Barcelona Convention on the protection of the Mediterranean and two of these protect important turtle beaches. The report is the result of a survey supported by the Turkish government under the Berne Convention which includes sea turtles as specially protected animals. International agreements thus have a role in ensuring conservation at a local level.

My main criticism of the report is of its price. Not only is it important that the message of the report gets through to every user of Turkey's beaches (including foreign tourists), but it is also a very useful resource for education in Turkey and throughout Europe. More careful thought to the value of education in conservation might have allowed a greater educational input, a larger print run and extensive sales through WWF's educational and general information book sales. This could have reduced the price to something more realistic for the average

conservationist and interested tourist. Conservationists need to pay greater attention to this in future.

Simon Albrecht

Flyways and reserve networks for waterbirds edited by H. Boyd and J. - Y. Piro, 1989. 109pp. English with French summaries. IWRB Special Publication No. 9. IWRB, Slimbridge, Gloucester GL2 7BX, England. No price given.

This is a collection of the six papers given at a workshop on flyways and reserve networks held in conjunction with the Third Meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, 1987. Brief accounts of three other workshops at the conference as well as the recommendations of the conference as a whole are also included.

The papers bring together recent population estimates of waders and wildfowl species that breed in the northern hemisphere, and they include much original and up-to-date information. They therefore provide an invaluable source of data necessary to put populations of wetland species into an international context.

The other workshops, which are each summarised in two pages, addressed criteria for identifying wetlands of international importance, wise use of wetlands, and the Ramsar Convention as a vehicle for linking wetland conservation and development.

Chris Bowden

The Scientific Results of the Royal Geographical Society's Oman Wahiba Sands Project 1985-1987. Edited by Dr R. W. Dutton; Assisted by Dr D. A. Bray. Journal of Oman Studies Special Report No. 3 1988. Pp xx + 576. £40.

The Wahiba Sands are a relatively small, elongate sand sea in central Oman, at the eastern extremity of Arabia (maximum dimensions 195 x 85 km). They are isolated from and much smaller than the giant sand sea of the Rub' al Khali. The fauna and flora of extensive dune areas such as these have been little studied in the Middle East, and this was one of the reasons behind the Royal Geographical Society's decision to launch an ambitious and broad-based study of the Wahiba Sands, in co-operation with the Omani government. This hefty volume contains some of the results of that work: 23 papers under the heading 'Biological Resources'; 17 papers on Earth Sciences and 11 papers on Economy and Society.

Of most relevance to OSME members are pp. 415-436: 'Birds of the Wahiba Sands' by M. D. Gallagher, who carried out the first ornithological survey of the sands, between December 1985 and March 1986. The systematic list reports 115 species from the sands and the habitats fringing them; 24 species breed in the sands themselves. A number of discoveries included first breeding of Rufous Bush Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes* in Oman, most northerly record of Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis* in Arabia; and most southerly breeding in Arabia of Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*, Striated Scops Owl *Otus brucei*, Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*, Yellow-throated Sparrow *Petronia xanthocollis* and Purple Sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica*. The harsh desert environment is moderated by the proximity of the coast and the cold summer waters of the Arabian Sea, and especially by the belts of *Prosopis* trees which run along wadis; the trees are very important in providing nesting, roosting and sheltering sites, as well as in

providing animal and vegetable food and nest-building material, allowing birds to live there that otherwise would not.

Other biological papers include two on mammals, one on reptiles and amphibians, and one on freshwater fishes; the rest of the faunal papers deal with invertebrates. As an arid-land study, the Royal Geographical Society's project was uniquely intense, large-scale and multi-disciplinary, and it is a credit to the organisers and authors that the large amount of results gathered have been written up, edited and published so quickly. For such a well-produced volume, the price is good value. Copies are obtainable for £40 from the RGS, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR, England, or from The Office of Conservation of the Environment, Diwan of Royal Court, PO Box 246, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, price 25 Omani Rials surface mail.

Mike Evans

Birdwatching in Eilat. By *David Yekutieli*. International Birdwatching Centre Eilat. 33 pages: 29 colour; 5 black and white; 3 maps. Price inc. p&p US \$7.50. Orders to M. Vaknine, IBCE, PO Box 774, Eilat 88000, Israel.

A warm welcome for this stylish little guide to birdwatching in one of the West Palearctic's top locations.

Despite containing only 33 pages, Birdwatching in Eilat is packed full of useful information. Well written and produced, the guide entices the reader with chapters on the natural features of the region, resident birds and the phenomenon of bird migration over this continental crossroad. When and where to watch birds in Eilat is again clear and concise, and I particularly liked the schedule of ornithological 'events', migratory species' occurrence on a monthly basis. The site-by-site guide and accompanying maps provide the birder with enough tips, directions and notable species to provide both a successful and enjoyable trip. With the ever-increasing number of birdwatchers visiting Eilat, it is perhaps understandable to include a rather sensible code of conduct. This leads into the comprehensive checklist to the birds recorded in Eilat: 413 so far. I note with interest the inclusion of 'split' Armenian Gull *Larus armenicus* and Oriental Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*. The generous use of some superb photographs, many in the hand, entices you further.

The book is good value for money and a guide that I would recommend to both new and experienced birders visiting the area. The proceeds from the sales of this guide will be devoted to the conservation and research of birds in Eilat.

S M Andrews

Midwinter Waterfowl Census, Turkey January 1989. By *Lieuwe J Dijkse*n and *Anne-Marie Blomert*. WIWO report 31. DFL 7,50.

This is the fourth report of its kind published by WIWO and is the result of their first joint census with DHKD. As the data build up over the years, the comparisons become most interesting.

The most worrying trend is the sudden and dramatic decrease in the numbers of dabbling ducks recorded: a reduction of 82% in teal numbers from over 100,000 in 1986 to 13,400 this time is worth further study. By comparison, diving ducks and coots have fared well.

The winter of 1989 was particularly hard in Turkey, with Central Anatolia

remaining snow covered for some time. As the report states, it is not possible to interpret the numbers of wildfowl recorded without taking this into account; but clearly without these valuable and repeated surveys such an interpretation is never going to be possible.

As well as surveying the waterfowl, this report gives some insight into the human activities affecting birds in Turkey. It is depressing to note the continuing threats from tourist developments and irrigation schemes, as well as the fact that hunting of protected species is still common. Hunting was noted in all but one protected area surveyed.

The inclusion of a list of non-waterfowl species seen will further enhance the value of this report for years to come.

Mark Boyd

Requests

Ringed Sardinian Warblers

Maurizio Fraissinet (Dipartimento di Zoologia, Università degli studi di Napoli, Via Mezzocannone 8, 80134 Napoli, Italy) has been carrying out a study in recent years on the migration of the Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*. The study is being extended, and information is now sought on ringing recoveries of the species in the Mediterranean and Middle East. If any members have details, could they please pass them on.

Colour-ringed Cormorants and Shags

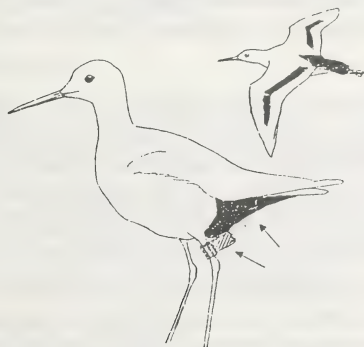
A number of countries have colour-ringing programmes for Cormorants *Phalacrocorax carbo* and Shags *P. aristotelis*. Reports of colour-ringed Cormorants should be sent to Pierre Yesou, 101 rue du 8 mai, F-85340 Olonne-sur-Mer, France. Reports of colour-ringed Shags should be sent to Isabelle Guyot, Parc Naturel Regional de la Corse, BP 417, F-20184 Ajaccio Cedex, France.

Colour-marked waders in the eastern Mediterranean and central and eastern Europe

In spring 1990, the Dutch Working Group for International Wader and Waterfowl Research (WIWO) will be organising the 'Eastern Mediterranean Wader Project 1990' in co-operation with the Wader Study Group.

The aim of this project is to describe the spring migration of waders through the eastern Mediterranean region and central and eastern Europe, and to identify major migration routes within these regions. Regular counts will be made at several sites within this region (including Egypt, Tunisia, Greece, Turkey and the Ukrainian Black Sea coast).

In Egypt and Tunisia, attempts will be made to ring and colour-mark large numbers of waders. The marks will include a colour dye on the rear of the underparts and on the rump and wing *in combination* with a coloured tape around the metal ring (above tarsus). The colour dye indicates the country of marking: (orange-) yellow for Egypt and (pinkish) red for Tunisia. The leg-flag will indicate the date of marking.



Anyone observing colour-marked waders with *one of these combinations* of colour marks is requested to send details (preferably in English, German or French) of the observation to: WIWO, c/o Dribergseweg 16c, 3708 JB Zeist, The Netherlands.

Details should include date, locality, species, position (rear/front) and colour of dye and tape (leg-flag left or right leg), and preferably also flock size, behaviour, and accompanying species. Do not forget to include your own address. Contributors will receive details of the locality and date of ringing and will be acknowledged in future publications.

Conservation research

Chris Bowden

What is the Conservation Research Committee and what does it do?

Most OSME council members regularly attend Conservation Research sub-committee (CRC) meetings, and this reflects the high importance and interest that we place on CRC activities. But its role within the society may be unclear to OSME members.

Since I have been chairman, the main emphasis has been on initiating and promoting potential OSME-organised projects/expeditions,

following the successful expedition to North Yemen. Having explored a number of options, plans for work in Turkey are progressing (see below) and we are pursuing possibilities for South Yemen. Once the projects are underway, CRC will continue to provide help and advice. These projects have been the committee's recent priority, but we also consider grant applications submitted to the Conservation Research Fund, and we are always looking for ways to promote conservation and OSME within the Middle East - recently we approved funding Hilary Welch to represent OSME at the ICBP conference in Adana, Turkey (see *Bulletin* 23).

Turkey update

Plans for a large-scale expedition to Turkey this year have had to be modified. For a number of reasons, we were forced to wait before pressing ahead, by which time it was too late to submit an application to the Turkish authorities. And following feedback from DHKD (the Society for Protection of Nature in Turkey), the emphasis has been changed towards the promotion of smaller-scale projects over a number of years. The note in the last bulletin prompted an excellent response from the OSME membership. Although no expedition is to take place this year, some of those who responded are now planning to visit areas identified by OSME as being in need of attention, as part of their holidays. We are also following up possibilities of arranging for OSME members with good ornithological knowledge to liaise with Turkish birdwatchers and share their expertise and enthusiasm.

Anyone interested in either targeting their Turkish birdwatching towards lesser-known areas in need of investigation, or in meeting up with Turkish birdwatchers, please let us know. We will then send an up-to-date list of such areas or do what we can to co-ordinate with people in Turkey. Future plans for more structured work in Turkey will be announced in due course. For anyone wishing to contact Dogal Hayati Koruma Dernegi (DHKD) directly, their address is as follows: DHKD, Kus Bolumu (Bird Section), PK 18 80810 Bebek, Istanbul, Turkey.

Conservation Research Fund - Why not apply?

A total of £500 in grants is available each year for proposed ornithological/conservation work within the remit of OSME. The amounts given normally range from £50 to £300. We would welcome more applications to the fund. We get rather few, and some of those that we do receive give too little detail, are submitted shortly prior to departure, or are otherwise unsuccessful. This could be remedied by following the criteria given below. Whilst there is no specific deadline for submissions, we advise applicants to submit proposals at least six months prior to the start of the project.

Submissions should be sent to: Chairman of Conservation Research Committee, OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, UK.

Please use the following guidelines for the submission of projects to the OSME Conservation Research Fund.

GENERAL INFORMATION (project summary, on one page only)

Title of project (include geographic area)

Applicant - name and address

Project period

Funds required (local currency and pounds sterling)

Endorsement(s) (name(s) of supporting bodies) and details of government permission requirements if applicable

Abstract (200 words maximum)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Objectives

Justification (relevance to OSME's aims)

Background information (summary of previous work and known information)

Public awareness (any educational component)

Expected outcome (management plan, data collection, education, training, protected area establishment, etc.)

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Timing (timetable of activities)

Logistics (details of travel, vehicles, accommodation, etc.)

Methods

Personnel (team members, individual responsibilities and curricula vitae)

Local participants and collaboration (involvement of local government authorities, students, etc.)

Schedule of presentation and content of report

Budget (give details of other sources approached and results to date)

REFERENCES (literature quoted in the text)

PLEASE SUBMIT FIVE COPIES OF YOUR PROPOSAL

Cover auction

The original pen-and-ink drawing for the front cover of this Bulletin, a Philby's Rock Partridge by S M Andrews, measuring 13.3 x 13.3 cm, is for sale in a postal auction. The proceeds are to be donated to the Conservation Research Fund. Please send your bid (no money at this stage) to: Cover auction, OSME, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, UK; to arrive by 15 June 1990. If your bid is successful, we will inform you immediately and despatch the drawing on receipt of a cheque.

OSME's first European Meeting

On the threshold of the 1990's, hopefully *the* decade of inspired world conservation, OSME is happy to announce its first joint meeting on the European continent. Organised by the Dutch Ornithological Union (NOU) and the Foundation Working Group on International Wader and Waterfowl Research (WIWO), an event will be held in Amsterdam, Holland, on the weekend 15 - 16 September 1990.

It is not possible to give a detailed itinerary at this stage, but the weekend is likely to run as follows:

Friday 14th - (For members travelling from Britain) Late afternoon/early evening depart from London, travel overnight arriving in Amsterdam approximately 08.30 am - Pickup by Dutch ornithologists.

Saturday 15th - Middle Eastern theme meeting at the University, speakers to include:

Gernant Magnin - Impact of hunting on birds of prey in Turkey;

Geoff Welch - The Djibouti project;

Biebaach - Passerine migration through the eastern Sahara;

Dr Michael Rands/Rodney Martins - Birds and their conservation in North Yemen;

WIWO - Eastern Mediterranean wader project;

Alexander Yurlov - The Siberian breeding grounds of waders from the Middle East;

Plus others.

Early evening travel to Oostelijk, Flevoland; informal evening in the company of event participants; accommodation in student lodging.

Sunday 16th

Informal WIWO-OSME activity with excellent birdwatching prospects. Late afternoon return to Amsterdam, and early evening depart for overnight return to London, arriving back approximately 08.30 am.

The method of travel to and from Holland has yet to be decided, and will depend on the interest of our members in this event. Travel by coach from London Victoria (approximately £40) or rail (approximately £60) are the most cost effective, and block-booking is possible - to hire a coach we need a good response! Members who need to return to the UK on the Sunday can do so by early rail/coach, although it looks likely that they will also have to organise their own accommodation in Amsterdam. Members wishing to participate in both days should look into the possibility of flying. If you wish to do this, or if you wish to make your own way there, please let us know so that we can book accommodation etc. We envisage a total cost of around £70 - £80 (inclusive of travel to Amsterdam, accommodation, evening meal and travel to and from Waddenzee). To give our Dutch counterparts time to organise the logistics, and for OSME to sort out transport, we require a response from you, including a £10 deposit (cheques/postal orders payable to OSME) *as soon as possible*.

Members on the European continent wishing to participate should

contact the Secretary of the NOU: Drs J F de Miranda, Couwenhoven 56/12, NL3703EW, Zeist, Netherlands.

To make a reservation, please write to:

SM Andrews, Dutch Meeting, OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, UK.

Twelfth Annual General Meeting

The twelfth AGM will be held on Saturday 7 July 1990 in the Lecture Theatre, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, South Kensington, London. Doors open at 1.30 pm for a 2.00 pm start. The afternoon will include three speakers: Nigel Cleere will speak on 'Nightjars in the Middle East - a guide to their identification' and promises us not only slides of the species but also tape recordings of their songs; Mike Jennings will talk about his ABBA project (the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Arabia) - OSME's conservation research fund has been supporting this important project since 1985 and we look forward to news of its progress; and Geoff and Hilary Welch will talk on birds and conservation initiatives in Djibouti, bringing us up to date on their work in this extra-limital part of OSME's region.

Everyone is welcome at the AGM (including non-members) but to obtain free entry to the Museum you need to obtain a ticket (free) in advance. Please write, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope and stating the number of tickets required to: The Secretary, OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, UK. Please allow 14 days for delivery.

Arabic bird names project

OSME is running a project to collect in one place the many and varied Arabic names of birds, both those in the literature but also more importantly those in common usage amongst farmers, fishermen, hunters and the like in the OSME region. While being of intrinsic cultural interest, such a list could also be of great value to conservation; knowledge of local names for birds is of inestimable value in any discussion or promotion of the conservation of wildlife at the local level.

I should be very interested to hear from any members who have noted local names, however few, for birds in their region. I am looking for transcriptions of the names as they sound (however unsuccessful the transcription may seem to you!), and an indication of what bird species or groups the names refer to. Also valuable would be information on where the name was found and who was using it. Those members who can write in Arabic should transliterate the name into arabic script if

possible. Any other details, such as geographical restriction of use or associated folklore, would also be welcome. An example might be:

aakwadi; Red-breasted Wheatear; Risabah, Y.A.R; used by a local farmer.

Please send any information to Mike Evans, OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, UK.



Library Report



Recent items received in the library include the following, which may not have come to the attention of all members.

Boye, P. (1989) **Report on the bird species recorded during a visit to Cyprus - no. 1, 20 March to 10 April 1987; no. 2, 9 April to 21 May 1988.**

Two privately produced reports detailing all observations made on the island during the periods specified, whilst the author was carrying out a vertebrate survey. Copies are available from the author at Weberstrasse 87, D-5300 Bonn 1, West Germany. Also, Peter Boye would appreciate any bat observations which members may have for Cyprus.

Dubai Natural History Group (1989) **The Gazelle vol 4/no. 12**

This edition of the Group's monthly newsletter contains three ornithological articles. The first details the first half of a three-day September 'Bird Bash' by John Bannon and Colin Richardson around the Emirates 'top' birding spots; there is a disturbing report on poisoned gulls in the Emirates - analysis showing that birds have been affected by both botulism and high concentrations of DDE; and a description by John Bannon of the first UAE record of White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis*. The DNHG can be contacted at PO Box 9292, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Fouda, M M & Baha El Din, S. (1989) **Courser 2**

The year 1989 saw the welcome appearance of this volume of the journal of the Ornithological Society of Egypt (*Courser* 1 was published in 1984). The main papers cover raptor migration; the ornithology of the Western Desert; the discovery of Arabian Warblers *Sylvia leucomelaena* in southeast Egypt; the first of two articles on Birding spots in Egypt; an account of the Bardawil and Gebel Elba National Parks; and the status in 1988 of birds on the Red Sea islands off Hurghada. All articles contain an Arabic summary. All OSME members with an interest in Egypt should seriously consider joining OSE (annual subscription \$10.00) and should certainly submit copies of any observations. Further details of OSE and *Courser* are available from Dr Moustafa M Fouda, Department of Zoology, Faculty of Science, Al Azhar University, Nasr City, Cairo, Egypt.

Gallagher, M J. (1990) **Oman Bird News 7 - Winter 1989**

This, the latest in the regular series of publications prepared by the Oman Bird Group, contains an interesting range of papers: two on observations from the UAE East Coast (new breeding records and Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters *Merops superciliosus*); status and identification of the Eastern Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe picata*; Ring-necked Parakeets *Psittacula krameri* in Saudi Arabia; results of an ornithological survey along the Oman/UAE border; a note on the House Crow in

Aden; plus several shorter notes and reviews. Details of the Oman Bird Group are available from Michael Gallagher, Oman Natural History Museum, PO Box 668, Muscat, Oman.

Jennings, M C & Al Salama, M I. (1989) ABBA Survey no. 6: Results of an Ornithological Survey of the Northern Asir and Southern Hedjaz Region of Saudi Arabia

This is the latest in Mike Jennings' series of reports of fieldwork carried out for the Atlas of Breeding Birds of Arabia project, sponsored by the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development. The 65-page report presents details of all birds recorded, with special sections on the endemic and breeding species. Details of a series of 'common bird censuses' made at 10 randomly chosen sites to assess numbers of birds using particular areas are also included. Copies of this report (price £12.00 inc. postage), and details of the ABBA project, are available from Mike Jennings, 4 Croft Close, Brampton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE18 8TJ.

Richardson, C. (Ed) (1989) Emirates Bird Report No. 9

This covers the period July-September 1989 and follows the format of previous reports. Of note in the systematic list are the first confirmed records of Merlin *Falco columbarius* and Antarctic Skua *Catharacta antarctica* for UAE, and the third UAE record of Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*. As usual, the text is enlivened by attractive vignettes by Bill Morton. Colin Richardson can be contacted at PO Box, 2825, Dubai, UAE.



Around the Region

This new section details recent bird sightings within the OSME region. Whenever possible, the significance of the record (eg unusually late migrant, second spring record, most southerly record) will be included. Records are published for interest only, and their publication here neither implies acceptance nor rejection by the records committee of the relevant country. Any OSME member is welcome to contribute to this feature, and we are particularly keen to hear from anyone resident in the Middle East who could submit regular records. For further details of what is involved in being a regular contributor or to submit records for the next Bulletin, covering the period January to August 1990, please write to: Around the region, OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, UK.

Bahrain

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* December 1989; the first record. E Hirschfeld

Small Skylark *Alauda gulgula* Five in December 1989; the second record. E Hirschfeld

Grey Hypocolius *Hypocolius ampelinus* Total of 700 in three roosts in December 1989; exceptionally high numbers. E Hirschfeld

Djibouti

Bataleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* Two at Madgoul on 3 March; second record, first was in February 1984. G Welch, H Welch

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* One, moulting into second-summer plumage, at Oeud Petite Doua on 26 February; first record. G Welch, H Welch

Red-tailed Wheatear *Oenanthe xanthopyrmyna* Female near Madgoul on 3

March; first record. *G. Welch* *H Welch*
Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata*
Immature near Ardo, Forêt du Day, on
9 March; first record and a major north-
wards range extension for the species.
G Welch, H Welch

Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus* Healthy colony found breeding in mangroves at Godoria; first record. *G Welch, H Welch*

Pale Rock Sparrow *Petronia brachydactyla* Seventeen at Oued Ambouli on 25 February, 180+ around Djibouti rubbish dump on 26 February, and 101+ migrating through coastal area north of Obock on 4 March; first Djibouti records. *G Welch, H Welch*

Egypt

Green Heron *Butorides striatus* Aswan on 21 October and 11 November 1989. *D Farrow*

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgus tracheliotus* Abu Simbel on 24 November 1989. *D Farrow*

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* Fala Haya on 6 January 1990. *D Farrow*

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* 11 at Fala Haya on 6 January 1990. *D Farrow*

Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor* Two on 26 October, three on 27 October 1989 at Hurghada; late migrants. *D Farrow*

Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* Two on 6 January 1990 at Jebel Asfar. *D Farrow*

White-tailed Plover *Chettusia leucura* Three on 7 January 1990 at Crocodile Island, Luxor. *D Farrow*

Spotted Sandgrouse *Pterocles senegalus* At least 120 on 17 November 1989 and 149 on 12 January 1990 on El Minga to El Kharga road; particularly high numbers. *D Farrow*

Eastern Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe plicata* 80 km west of Safaga on 5 February 1989; very unusual. *D Farrow*

North Yemen

Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis* Khamis Bani Sadr on 28 December

1989; unusually far inland (100 km). *D Farrow*

Lesser Flamingo *Phoenicopterus minor* Hodeidah sewage farm in early November 1989; the second record, but breeds nearby. *R Martins, N Redman, M Ullman*

Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* Nine in early November at Ta'izz; see 'news and information' for significance. *R Martins, N Redman, M Ullman*

Andalusian Hemipode *Turnix sylvatica* Early November 1989; the fifth record for Arabia. *R Martins, N Redman, M Ullman*

Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus* Khawkhah in early November 1989; late and unusual record. *R Martins, N Redman, M Ullman*



Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata* Five flying north in early November at Al Qutay; the second record. *R Martins, N Redman, M Ullman*

White-crowned Black Wheatear *Oenanthe leucopyga* Marib in November 1989; very few records. *R Martins, N Redman, M Ullman*

Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus* At least 60 in November 1990 at Marib; exceptionally high numbers. *R Martins, N Redman, M Ullman*

Turkey

Mongolian Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes mongolicus* Two records in June 1989 in the east; first west Palearctic records except for old and suspect ones from Azerbaijan - full details and photographs will be published in *Limicola* shortly. *Per D Brooks*

Books on the natural history of the Middle East and North Africa

We stock a side selection of specialised natural history and travel books on countries covered by The Ornithological Society of the Middle East

All books post free (UK only). For overseas rates, see catalogue (FREE on request). Insurance extra if required.

Birds of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia <i>Bundy et al</i>	£35.00
The Birds of Israel <i>Paz</i>	£21.95
Birds of the Middle East and North Africa <i>Hollom et al</i>	£14.00
The Birds of Egypt <i>Goodman, Meininger et al</i>	£70.00
Inland Birds of Saudi Arabia <i>Silby</i>	£30.00
Birds of Lebanon and the Jordan Area <i>Vere Benson</i> English text	£4.50
Birds of Lebanon and the Jordan Area <i>Vere Benson</i> Arabic text	£5.00
A Field Guide to the Birds of East Africa <i>Williams, Arlott</i>	£9.95
Moroccan Slender-billed Curlew Survey, winter 1987-88 <i>ICBP</i>	£5.00
A Birdwatchers Guide to Morocco <i>Bergier</i>	£8.50
Let's Look at Southern Morocco <i>Ornitholidays</i>	£3.50
Let's Look at North-west Turkey <i>Ornitholidays</i>	£3.50
Marvel of the Desert - the Camel in Saudi Arabia <i>Pesce</i>	£24.95
Conservation and Biology of Desert Antelopes <i>Dixon, Jones</i>	£25.00
Golden Days in the Desert - Wildflowers of Saudi Arabia <i>Lipscombe, Vincent</i>	£28.00
The Wild Flowering Plants of Bahrain <i>Cornes</i>	£14.50
Plants of the Bible <i>Moldenke</i>	£7.95
Discovering Kuwait's Wildlife <i>Clayton et al</i>	£20.00
Ecology and Natural History of Desert Lizards <i>Pianka</i>	£14.50
Red Sea Reef Fishes <i>Randall</i>	£32.00
Red Sea Invertebrates <i>Vine</i>	£39.50
Sharks of Arabia <i>Randall</i>	£26.00
The Red Sea <i>Vine</i>	£24.00
Mineral Wealth of Saudi Arabia <i>Spencer, Farra</i>	£23.75
Yemen - A Travel Survival Kit	£5.95
Morocco, Algeria & Tunisia - A Travel Survival Kit	£7.95
Egypt and the Sudan - A Travel Survival Kit	£6.95
Turkey - A Travel Survival Kit	£7.95

Plus over 1500 titles covering Great Britain and the rest of the world

Subbuteo Natural History Books Ltd (OSME members)

Ffordd-Y-Llan, Treuddyn, Mold, Clwyd CH7 4LN UK

Tel. 0352 770581 (24 hours) or visit by appointment

ACCESS/VISA accepted by telephone.

We also buy and sell out of print and secondhand natural history books.

Do you have the courage to identify a Clamorous Reed Warbler ?

ISRAEL and Middle East BIRD SONGS includes a large number of species never published on cassettes or discs before. Two cassettes and a booklet in English with digitally recorded songs and calls of 124 species of Middle East birds.



Sand Partridge, Black Francolin, Greater Sand Plover, Armenian Gull, five species of Sandgrouse, Hume's Tavny Owl, Ring-necked Parakeet, Little Swift, White-breasted Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, Little Green Bee-eater, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Dunn's, Bar-tailed Desert, Desert, Hoopoe, Bimaculated and Lesser Short-toed Lark, Richard's and Long-billed Pipit, Citrine Wagtail, Yellow-vented Bulbul, Rufous Bush Robin, White-troated Robin, Isabelline, Mourning, Hooded and White-crowned Black Wheatear, Graceful, Scrub, Clamorous Reed, Upcher's and Arabian Warbler, Brown Babbler, Orange-tufted Sunbird, Brown-necked Raven, Fan-tailed Raven, Tristram's Grackle, Dead Sea Sparrow, Pale Rock Sparrow, Tristram's Serin, Crimson-winged Finch, Desert Finch, Sinai Rosefinch, House Bunting, Cinereous Bunting, and many other Middle East birds.

KRISTER MILD, Koppurvägen 23, S-175 72 JÄRFÄLLA, SWEDEN. Price: 200 Swedish kronor (SEK), or equivalent in other currencies, including postage, but only if payment is made from your local Post Office or Giro Bank plc directly into Swedish Post Office Giro account number 463 93 22-9 / Krister Mild. Price is 230 SEK if payment is made in an international money order or by a cheque drawn on a bank. All cheques must be sent directly to Krister Mild (not to a Swedish bank to be forwarded to Krister Mild).

OSME's exclusive T shirts are once again available for the summer season, at last year's prices. Black-and-tan or black-and-white in sizes M/L and X/L for only £6.80 surface mail or £9.50 air mail.



Ornithological Society of the Middle East

c/o The Lodge, Sandy Bedfordshire SG19 2DL UK

The Ornithological Society of the Middle East was formed in April 1978 and is a successor to the Ornithological Society of Turkey. Its aims are as follows:

- 1 To collect, collate and publish ornithological data on the birds of the Middle East
- 2 To encourage an interest in and conservation of birds of the Middle East
- 3 To develop a mutually beneficial working relationship with all environmental and conservation bodies and natural history societies in and concerned with the Middle East

Membership is open to all and spans over 40 countries

Publications *Sandgrouse* is the Society's journal and contains scientific papers on all aspects of the ornithology of the Middle East. A Bulletin covering all aspects of birdwatching and conservation in the Middle East is also issued bi-annually to all members.

For Further details and current subscription rates, write to: The Secretary, OSME, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, UK

Charitable registration number 282938

Advertising rates Full page £60; half page £40; quarter page £25

Contents

- 1 Editorial
- 2 Ornithological observations from the Yemen Arab Republic
(North Yemen) in early May 1989 *C W T Pilcher and G
Gregory*
- 11 Dotterels in Bahrain, winter 1988/89 *Tom Nightingale*
- 15 The rapid movement of a Turkish-ringed Wryneck to
Beirut, Lebanon *Vincent van den Berk*
- 17 News and Information *Compiled by Simon Albrecht*
- 24 WIWO Reports
- 25 Letters
The extinction of the Bald Ibis in Turkey *Simon Albrecht*
The winter quarters of migratory Dead Sea Sparrows
J Denis Summers-Smith
- 27 Reviews
- 30 Requests
- 31 Conservation research *Chris Bowden*
- 33 Cover auction
- 34 OSME's First European Meeting
- 35 Twelfth Annual General Meeting
- 35 Arabic bird names project
- 36 Library Report
- 37 Around the Region



OSME

c/o THE LODGE, SANDY, BEDFORDSHIRE, SG19 2DL, UK